

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 ARAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2826

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, MILI, PN, PQ

SUBJECT: GOP PROTESTS ALLEGED OVERFLIGHT OF RIO HATO

1. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS DELIVERED A FIRST-PERSON DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO THE EMBASSY AFTERNOON OF JULY 18 STRONGLY CONDEMNING AN OVERFLIGHT OF THE RIO HATO MILITARY BASE BY USAF A-7'S THAT ALLEGEDLY OCCURRED ON JULY 11. USSOUTHCOM IS INVESTIGATING THE GOP'S ALLEGATIONS, AND EMBASSY WILL REPORT RESULTS SHORTLY.

2. FOLLOWING IS INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS NOTE NO. DREU-147/402-1 OF JULY 12, 1977:

QUOTE: MINISTER COUNSELOR:

I HAVE THE HONOR OF ADDRESSING YOUR HONOR TO PROTEST IN THE MOST STRONG MANNER FOR THE NEW VIOLATION AND PROVOCATION BY THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE QUARTERED IN THE CANAL ZONE, COMMITTED YESTERDAY MORNING, WHEN TWO JET AIRCRAFT, TYPE A-7 OVERFLEW THE RIO HATO BASE DISTURBING NOT ONLY THE CIVILIAN POPULATION BUT ALSO THE GUARDIA NACIONAL PERSONNEL QUARTERED IN SAID PANAMANIAN MILITARY BASE.

THIS IS THE SECOND TIME THAT AN INCIDENT OF THIS

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NATURE OCCURS, THE ONE BEFORE HAVING BEEN REPORTED TO THE AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM J. JORDEN, ON JANUARY 31, 1977 BY NOTE NO. DREU-23/402-1, WHEN IN THE SAME MANNER AS NOW, I SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MY COUNTRY, A SIMILAR PROTEST WARNING OF THE DANGER THAT SUCH IRR-RESPONSIBLE ACTION COMPRISES DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE

SECURITY MECHANISMS IN SAID BASE MIGHT AUTOMATICALLY FIRE PROJECTILES THAT WOULD CAUSE THE DESTRUCTION IN THE AIR OF THE VIOLATING AIRCRAFT, WITH OR WITHOUT ITS PILOT, WHICH WOULD CAUSE, WITHOUT DOUBT, A VERY DELICATE SITUATION IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, OBVIOUSLY NOT BY OUR FAULT, BUT BY THAT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO WHICH THE VIOLATING AIRCRAFT OR AIRCRAFTS BELONG. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME, I REPEAT, THAT A SERIOUS INCIDENT OF THIS NATURE HAPPENS AND IT IS THE SECOND TIME, ALSO, THAT THE GROUND AUTHORITIES OF THE RIO HATO MILITARY BASE HAVE HAD TO RESORT TO A HIGHEST EFFORT OF SURVEILLANCE TO AVOID THE RESULT OF WHICH I AM TALKING ABOUT.

NEVERTHELESS, I THINK THAT IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT IF A SITUATION OF THIS NATURE WOULD HAPPEN A THIRD TIME, THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES THAT IN THE PREVIOUS TWO OCCASIONS LUCKILY AVOIDED THE TRAGEDY THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA WISHED TO AVOID, SUCH PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES WOULD NOT WORK A THIRD TIME IN THIS CASE AND THAT THE DISASTER WILL HAPPEN. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I PERMIT MYSELF TO WARN HIS HONOR VERY SERIOUSLY ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THIS POSSIBILITY AND TO EXPRESS THAT IF THE WORST CAME TO HAPPEN - AND (I) HOPE THAT IT WILL NOT BE SO - THE TRAGEDY WOULD BE CAUSED SOLELY AND EXCLUSIVELY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA DUE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ITS OVERSIGHT AND NEGLIGENCE IN NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO THE CALL OF ITS SENSES MADE IN TIME, AS IN EFFECT IS DONE AGAIN NOW, BY THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA. ON THIS DATE I HAVE BROUGHT THIS ANNOYING PROBLEM TO THE ATTENTION OF THE AMBASSADOR FROM PANAMA TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, HIS EXCELLENCY GABRIEL LEWIS GALINDO, WITH THE INTENTION THAT CONCURRENTLY WITH THE PRESENTATION BY THIS NOTE I PERSONALLY MAKE TO YOUR HONOR TODAY, HE MAY PRESENT THE SAME PROTEST TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE SO THERE MAY BE NO WAY OR REASON WHATSOEVER THAT IT MAY BE SAID THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WAS NOT INFORMED OF THESE INCIDENTS, BECAUSE THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN PANAMA FAILED TO INFORM THE GOVERNMENT OF ITS COUNTRY IN WASHINGTON. I REQUEST FROM YOUR HONOR THAT A VERY STRICT INVESTIGATION BE MADE ON THIS HAPPENING AND THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT WATCH OVER AND TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES SO THAT THIS UNPLEASANT EPISODE, THAT VIOLATES THE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, WILL NOT REPEAT ITSELF. I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OCCASION TO EXPRESS TO YOUR HONOR THE SENTIMENTS OF MY DISTINGUISHED CONSIDERATION.

CARLOS OZORES
VICE-MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS UNQUOTE

3. EMBASSY IS POUCHING COPY OF NOTE AND INFORMAL
TRANSLATION TO ARA/PAN.
GONZALEZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
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